

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSM-03 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8668
INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CAIRO 12058

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PGOV EG
SUBJECT: CABINET RESHUFFLE: WHO GOES?

REF: CAIRO 11935

SUMMARY: SADAT'S MAY 2 SPEECH HAS HEIGHTENED SPEC-
ULATION ON CABINET CHANGES. ATTENTION FOCUSED ON MEMBERS
ECONOMIC GROUP, MIN INFO EL-SAWI, FOUAD MOHIE EL DIN
AND MIN TOURISM STINO. MIN HEALTH BADRAN ALSO LISTED
BUT WITH LESS CERTAINTY. EMBASSY QUESTIONS WHETHER
CHANGE WILL BE AS EXTENSIVE AS SPECULATION SUGGESTS
AND WHETHER IT WILL HAVE MUCH AFFECT ON GOVERNMENT
OPERATIONS. CORRUPTION LIKELY REMAIN IMPORTANT ISSUE.
CRITICS WILL CONTINUE TO ATTACK SALEM AS ONE OF EGYPT'S
MAJOR PROBLEMS. END SUMMARY.

1. ANNOUNCEMENT. SADAT'S MAY 2 INSTRUCTION TO PM SALEM
TO EFFECT IMMEDIATE CABINET RESHUFFLE HAS SPARKED
RENEWED SPECULATION ON WHICH MINISTERS WILL LOSE THEIR
PORTFOLIOS. MAY 3 PRESS SUGGESTS CHANGES WILL BE
LIMITED IN SCOPE, GEARED TO APPOINTING INDIVIDUALS
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CAPABLE OF MAKING DECISIONS AND CONFRONTING GOVERNMENT
CRITICS. SALEM SAID TO BE BEGINNING CONSULTATIONS
TODAY; NEW MINISTERIAL LINEUP TO BE ANNOUNCED WITHIN
NEXT FIVE DAYS (DEPENDING ON PAPER READ).

2. SCOPE. PUBLIC SPECULATION HAS CENTERED ON MOST OBVIOUS
CANDIDATES. KAISSOUNI STILL HEADS LIST. HIS PREVIOUS AT-

TEMPTS RESIGN ARE WELL KNOWN, INCLUDING MOST RECENT SUBMISSION WHICH PRECEDED CURRENT TRIP TO U.S. FOR MEDICAL CHECK-UP. FURTHER, ECONOMIC MINISTRIES HAVE BEEN AT CENTER CABINET/PARLIAMENTARY SQUABBLES WHICH SADAT CASTIGATED IN ADDRESS. HOWEVER, KAISSOUNI'S INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION AND DIFFICULTY OF FINDING SUITABLE REPLACEMENT MILITATE AGAINST ACCEPTANCE OF HIS RESIGNATION.

3. ECONOMIC MINISTERS. SHOULD KAISSOUNI GO, HIS TWO PROTEGES, MINECON HAMED EL SAYEH AND MINFINANCE SALAH HAMED, WOULD PROBABLY ALSO RESIGN. EL SAYEH HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR HE WOULD DO SO. CONCEIVABLY, HOWEVER, GIVEN DEARTH OF REPLACEMENT TALENT, THEY MIGHT BE PRESSURED INTO STAYING ON. WE HAD EARLIER HEARD THAT TRADE AND SUPPLY PORTFOLIOS WOULD BE SPLIT. ZAKARIA TEWFIK, WHO CURRENTLY HOLDS BOTH, IS ANXIOUS RID HIMSELF OF SUPPLY WHICH HE SEES AS A THANKLESS OPERATION. SOME OBSERVERS ALSO BELIEVE THAT AHMED EZZ EL DIN HILAL, ONE OF MOST COMPETENT MINISTERS, WOULD LIKE TO DIVEST HIMSELF OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR INDUSTRY, RETAINING ONLY PETROLEUM PORTFOLIO.

4. MIN OF INFO AND CULTURE ABDEL MONEIM EL-SAWI. EL-SAWI'S SON'S INVOLVEMENT IN LARGE SCALE QUESTIONABLE FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS WITH HIS FATHER'S MINISTRY MAKES CONFIDENTIAL

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EL-SAWI LIKELY CANDIDATE FOR CHANGE. WHILE EL-SAWI IS LOYAL SADAT STALWART, WITH OUTSTANDING FAMILIAL TIES, HE HAS ALIENATED MUCH OF EGYPT'S CULTURAL COMMUNITY AND PROVEN ONLY MINIMALLY EFFECTIVE IN HANDLING INFORMATION. EL-SAWI HOPES BE APPOINTED AS AHAM'S EDITOR-IN-CHIEF (AS DO ABDUL QADIR HATEM, GAMAL AL-OTEIFY, AND FRONT RUNNER ALY HAMDI GAMAL). REPLACING HIM IN CABINET COULD BE DIFFICULTY. JOB IS VIEWED AS THANKLESS; MOST LIKELY SUCCESSORS NOW EARNING FAR IN EXCESS OF MINISTERIAL SALARIES ON OUTSIDE. MURSI SAAD AD-DIN IS ONLY CANDIDATE ACTIVELY SEEKING POST.

5. FOUAD MOHIE EL DIN. MOHIE EL DIN'S "ILLNESS", WHICH PREVENTED HIS ATTENDING MAY DAY FESTIVITIES, IS READ BY SOME AS SIGN HE ON WAY OUT. ADDITIONALLY, IT WAS WITHIN HIS PEOPLES ASSEMBLY BAILIWICK (NOT TO MENTION MISR PARTY) THAT SADAT FOUND SO MUCH TO CRITICIZE. (SOME CONTACTS THINK CRITICISM ALSO DIRECTED AGAINST SAYYID MAREI FOR HIS FAILURE CONTROL PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

6. MOHEB RAMZI STINO. STINO LIKELY GET TAGGED WITH

BLAME FOR PYRAMIDS' PLATEAU FIASCO, WHICH EVEN SADAT APPARENTLY NOW PERCEIVES AS ODORIFEROUS. PROBLEM IS SCANDAL REPORTEDLY REACHES DEEPLY WITHIN EGYPT'S FIRST FAMILIES, MOST OF WHOM ARE REPUTED TO BE FINANCIALLY INVOLVED. IF STINO AGREES GO QUIETLY, HE MOST LIKELY BE REPLACED BY FELLOW COPT--TOURISM HAS LONG BEEN CHRISTIAN PRESERVE.

7. IBRAHIM BADRAN. BADRAN WANTS TO LEAVE GOVERNMENT TO DEVOTE MORE ATTENTION TO MEDICAL INTERESTS, BUT FIRST WISHES EFFECT NUMBER OF HEALTH REFORMS, PARTICULARLY IN PREVENTION FIELD. ALSO, BADRAN'S CURRENT ATTENDANCE AT WHO MEETING ARGUES AGAINST EARLY DISMISSAL.

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8. COMMENT: OUR BRITISH COLLEAGUES HAVE DEVELOPED MUCH THE SAME LIST OF LIKELY CANDIDATES BASED ON LOGICAL EXTENSION SADAT SPEECH AND POPULAR SPECULATION. MUST CAUTION, HOWEVER, THAT LOGIC NOT NECESSARILY MAJOR IN-

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CAIRO 12058

GRADIENT IN EGYPTIAN CABINET CHANGES. CHANGES WILL PROBABLY BE LESS EXTENSIVE THAN ABOVE SUGGESTS AND SHOULD HAVE LITTLE EFFECT ON CABINET ACTIVITY. NOR

WILL IT REMOVE CORRUPTION AS LIVE ISSUE. ROOTS OF THIS VIEWED AS REACHING MUCH HIGHER THAN JUNIOR MINISTERS, KAISOUMI'S DEPARTURE IS ONLY ONE WHICH COULD HAVE MAJOR POLICY IMPLICATIONS. GOVERNMENT CRITICS, WITHIN PARLIAMENT AND OUTSIDE, ARE UNLIKELY TO BE SATISFIED BY LIMITED CHANGE. IN THEIR VIEW, PRIME MINISTER IS ONE OF MAJOR PROBLEMS AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN LAST MAN SADAT TASKED WITH REORGANIZING GOVERNMENT, . INDEED, MANY BUSINESSMEN AND PERHAPS SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN UNHAPPY HAD SADAT RETURNED TO AUTOCRATIC RULE. EILTS

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